

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

No. 183

SEPTEMBER, 1936

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CONSTITUENCY ELEPHANTIASIS SWOLLEN ELECTORATES and BROAD ACRES

By
JACK CUTTER

It would appear that when the last revision of parliamentary seats took place in 1918, those responsible were guided as much by numerical as by geographical considerations. In these days—before universal parliamentary franchise—a certain number of electors was presumably taken as a good average for a constituency and the boundaries then arranged to come as near as possible to that average number as geographical circumstances would permit.

Apparently about 30,000 electors per member was the aim and, in the prevailing circumstances, it was doubtless as good a method as any of allocating territorial representation.

But the march of post-war politics and the changed habits of the people have played havoc with the nice arrangement of the Divisions. First of all, the extension of the franchise to women on the same terms as men smashed their averages and produced a multitude of anomalies. Then the "suburban spread" began. Every town and city overflowed its parliamentary boundary and distributed its population over double and treble its original acreage, presenting a new crop of anomalies and problems which will have to be tackled before long.

The Romford Division of Essex provides the classical example. What in 1918 was a typical county Division, more rural than urban, is in 1936 a huge conglomeration of industrial centres, housing estates and swollen urban districts. Its parliamentary electors on the 1935 register reached the enormous total of 167,939 (I have not yet seen the 1936 register, but

doubtless at least 10,000 will be added). These 167,939 people are represented in Parliament by one man, John Parker, the Labour M.P., while the City of London, with only 40,679 electors, is represented by *two Tories*.

Every year more constituencies join the ranks of the six-figure electorates, and it is clearly all wrong that more than 100,000 voters are allocated to the election of one representative, while in so many other constituencies less than half that number have the same representation.

It is rumoured that the next Parliament will tackle this problem, but I have heard no rumours as to whether it is to be solved by retaining the average constituency at about 50,000 and increasing the number of M.P.'s or by enlarging the smaller Divisions (numerically speaking) and retaining the number of M.P.'s at the present figure. The Labour Movement ought to have a say in this and should be saying something definite to the authorities before long. It might be as well if the D.L.P.'s in the constituencies affected were to review their positions and submit their proposed solutions to Head Office. County Federations could usefully discuss the problem and make recommendations. In any revision of seats it is important that we should look to our interest and prospects. *Verb sap.*

So much for constituencies suffering from numerical elephantiasis. A word or two about constituencies with the same disease in a geographical sense follows naturally and enables me to get in a spot of advice to rural D.L.P.'s.

CONTINUING JACK CUTTER

RURAL ELECTIONEERING
AND THE D.L.P. CAR

There are about 300 County Divisions and the average size is considerably nearer 300 than 200 square miles. A goodly number are well over 400 square miles, and dozens of them have more than 80 polling districts.

Generally speaking, the wider the boundaries of a Division the more the resources, financial and otherwise, at the disposal of the anti-Labour forces. It is one of the major problems of the Labour Movement that the reverse is usually the case with us. The greater the square mileage of a Division and the consequent greater need for equipment and contacts, the smaller our resources for the job.

Many a County Council seat will probably go uncontested in the spring, not because of the lack of will or candidates to contest them, but solely because the D.L.P.'s have decided they cannot find the money. Many a far-flung Division runs a Labour candidate every General Election on a pitifully inadequate expenditure insufficient to cover the barest essentials of a good campaign.

The Party's recent Agricultural Campaign has shown up the fact that the greatest single problem in most truly rural constituencies is transport. When it is necessary to hold three meetings in one night in two hours and in villages from five to ten miles apart with two speakers and two chairmen, train and bus services are useless even where they exist and push bikes are too slow. At least one car is an essential and the cost of car hire is a heavy item. Obviously the solution is for the D.L.P. to secure a car of its own.

"Obviously," says the Divisional E.C., "but what are we going to use for money to buy a car in the first place and how are we going to pay for its licence, running, garage and repair costs afterwards? It is beyond the powers of a handful of land-workers and their wives with the princely income of 32 bob a week."

Harken to the experience of one D.L.P. which argued that way once.

There is a Divisional Labour Party which once upon a time thought that ownership of a car was not for the likes of us. In one year, out of a

total income of round about £150, it spent nearly £50 in transportation. Cars were hired for speakers and for special occasions and the costs of such haulage was more than the costs of printing and meeting rooms put together!

Then a Party member in the motor trade offered the Party a second-hand car at £25, guaranteeing it to stand up to reasonable usage and offering to keep an eye on its innards. After much discussion and with many misgivings the Party decided to take the plunge and bought the car.

That was three years ago, and the same car is still on the road about three nights each week, nine months each year. True, it is no Rolls, and rattles like a stockbroker on Budget Day, but it keeps going.

In the three years the car has cost just under £150, including its initial cost, garaging, petrol, oil, taxes, insurances, tyres and repairs.

So, you will say, the Party hasn't saved anything. You are wrong. Since purchasing the car continuous contacts have been kept with Local Parties all over the far-flung Division. The number of meetings has been trebled; regular post-sowing and pre-harvest campaigns have covered every polling district twice a year; scattered officers have kept in touch; a loud-speaker equipment has been purchased and used with ease, and at the General Election the car saved its cost twice over.

The income of the Party has increased by 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. over the pre-car year, and the Party, far from regretting its bargain, is now about to sell its Old Faithful in part exchange for a newer model, stating that to run the Division without a car would be unthinkable and impossible. There has never been any lack of volunteer drivers, and my experience is that there never is.

So, you car-less Divisions with broad acres and far-flung boundaries, seek out a sympathiser "in the trade" and get a budget from him. If a car will help you to do more work, easier, at less cost and with increased membership—and perhaps a little increased prestige—it is well worth consideration.

REDISTRIBUTION

READERS ARE ASKED TO WRITE JACK CUTTER

To the Editor, "Labour Organiser."

Dear Colleague,

When, rather hurriedly, I wrote my September article for the "L.O." two days ago and chose as part of the subject matter the question of the revision of constituency boundaries, I had the feeling that this important subject ought to be more fully dealt with.

On opening my "Herald" this morning I read the enclosed cutting with a great deal of interest.

In recent years many Boroughs and Urban Districts have rearranged their ward boundaries, and many of my colleagues know the wrangling and wangling behind the scenes on the part of the Tories to fix the new boundaries to the disadvantage of Labour. We must prevent this sort of thing in the wider field of parliamentary constituency allocation.

It is clear from the enclosed "Herald" story that the Tory Party is up to its old games, and as most of the smaller constituencies (numerically speaking) are Labour seats we should be alert in safeguarding our positions.

This is a matter for the Party as a whole to deal with, and Head Office is not neglecting it. There is no reason, however, why the "L.O.," with its specialised circulation and purpose, should not help. In my article next month I will (with your approval) review the constituencies likely to be affected, and meanwhile would welcome comments from Agents and Party Secretaries in each Divisions.

Letters addressed to "Jack Cutter," c/o "The Labour Organiser," and posted before September 30th, will be appreciated.

I would particularly welcome the views of Agents or Secretaries in two-membered Divisions as to the advisability or otherwise of abolishing this type of representation, and perhaps officers in the large and small constituencies would let me know their suggestions on boundary alterations in their vicinity.

Yours sincerely,

JACK CUTTER.

[The cutting enclosed by our esteemed contributor was an extract from the "Daily Herald" of 8th

September, where it was stated that the Tory Agents were to discuss the question of Redistribution at their Annual Meeting.—Ed., "L.O."]

WOODCRAFT FOLK YEAR BOOK.

Just sixpence! And if our readers will send just this amount to any of the addresses which have appeared in the "L.O." or to the publisher, E. Jones, 42, Heatherdene Close, Morden Road, Mitcham, they will get in return a 40 pp. illustrated brochure which will prove an eye-opener regarding the activities and ideals of the Folk.

Recommended by the Labour Party, accepted and supported by the Co-operative Movement, the Woodcraft Folk ought to be stronger. They would be if Labour people realised the immense importance of "catching them young" and the good and varied ways of doing it practised by the Folk. The Year Book tells all that.

It is a bright and interesting handbook, well printed, and the issue of this Year Book marks a definite advance for the Woodcraft Folk. The movement can now sustain a printed annual as it sustains already an enlarged printed monthly, "New Pioneer." That excellent journal ought also to be better known.

The printed word plays a key part in the essential propaganda of the Woodcraft Folk. But the Year Book, like "New Pioneer," is more than propaganda. It is a link in the movement, a means to the improvement of educational work and organisation and a stimulus to new efforts.

We hope that 1936 will mark the beginning of a more generous appreciation in the Labour Movement of the needs of children, and we urge all Labour Parties throughout the country to give the needs of the Woodcraft Folk their keenest attention during the forthcoming winter.

**Do ALL the officers
of your Party get the
"L.O."?**

If not, why not?

**The "L.O." wants
1,000 New Readers
Will you help?**

PERPETUAL ELECTIONEERING

AN ADDRESS BY

FRED J. KETTLE (Dip. Econ. Oxon.)

(Concluded from last month)

Now Where Do YOU Come In?

Your conversation, properly directed, could make more Socialists than all the propaganda methods we have noted. One reason for the weakness of the churches to-day is that the members are not missionaries. The real value of the meeting is to arouse enthusiasm and to provide ammunition.

Organisation.

All sowing, all propaganda, is useless unless we are in a position to reap. In many places, electioneering is wasteful effort because there is no efficient direction. We have seen at bye-elections, herds of enthusiastic workers come in late to the campaign, and come in untrained and unprepared. The same is true in some measure of most ordinary elections. The efforts of these workers would have been much more effective if:—

1. The work had been carefully planned and sub-divided;
2. Sufficient supervisory workers had been trained in advance.

It would be even better still if these workers presented themselves some time before the election—that is, if they enrolled as active individual members of the party—to be themselves trained for their work. It is difficult to convince party members of this, let alone the unattached election worker. Training is neglected often because an address on organisation is to many a dull subject as compared with a topical propaganda speech.

But This Job Has Got To Be Done.

Not long ago only the agents believed this. Now some candidates advocate it. To-morrow, parties and their members must accept it—or perish. You who have the future of the Socialist movement at heart must make up your minds to take this medicine and to learn your JOB, and to realise the full value of learning your job in advance.

Consider for a few moments the task of the agent and his chief assistants at an election, then you will realise the tremendous relief possible if the

disposition of work and workers can be made in advance. In 1922, I wrote in the *Labour Organiser*, "It might be possible to imagine a state of organisation in which agent, candidate, and workers all pass away, the machinery going merrily on in the hands of strangers!" I have actually had the happy experience of waiting for a job during an election, things were going so smoothly.

There are certain legal points which have to be attended to where mistakes may imperil the chances of winning. Hindrances through attending to late-coming workers may cause one of these mistakes. Meeting arrangements are not made in a moment. Indeed, they generally present us with an intricate jig-saw puzzle that often falls to pieces as soon as it is assembled. We have to dovetail arrangements for two or three or more indoor meetings per day with outdoor meetings. There are halls to book, posters, handbills and advertisements to prepare, platforms to arrange, time-tables to work out, with adequate transport arrangements. Stewards and literature sellers and collectors have to be mobilised and instructed. The election address has to be prepared. (Candidates are not always able to do this satisfactorily alone.) It has to be distributed. There are envelopes, canvass cards and poll cards to write. Canvassing must be effectively supervised and controlled and the returns carefully studied as a guide to tactical dispositions. On this work the fetching-up of voters on polling day—and hence the result—depends. Much valuable time is wasted here in allocating and instructing late-comers. There are committee rooms to book, to staff and to work. Transport arrangements for polling day demand attention, for this may mean the difference between victory and defeat. Along with this there is a pile of miscellaneous spare-time (?) work to be done—arranging the candidate's personal canvass; arranging for the reception of deputations to the candidate; keeping the candidate to his meeting time-table. Every Tom, Dick and Harry thinks that his own little personal prob-

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lem is the biggest ever, and he wants to button-hole the candidate before or after the meeting. Hence candidates get the reputation of being the most frequent causes of arrangements breaking down. There is the press to be fed and other publicity to be put out. Removals must be traced, canvassed and fetched, for on an ageing register, this may be of vital importance. Special arrangements often have to be made to use women workers and attend to women electors. All the time the spectre of C.I.P.P.A. looms over the hard-pressed agent and night and day he is haunted by the question, "Are we over-spent?"

To many of his critics who attend the inquest after an election the agent might well say, "Where were you twelve months, six months, three months before the election?"

Does This Hit YOU?

Are you an Individual Member? Are you a paying member or a working member. Do you know your Ward Secretary and does he know what you are going to do at the next election? There are, alas! only too many in our Party who won't play without the limelight, yet how many plays would get over but for the sceneshifters? Learn your job in advance and be ready for the word "Go!" Let these lines of Kipling be your inspiration:—

Then seek your job with thankfulness

And work till further orders,

If it's only netting strawberries

Or killing slugs off borders.

And when your back stops aching

And your hands begin to harden,

You'll find yourself a partner

In the Glory of the Garden.

ORGANISING A CHILDREN'S TREAT.

For many years past the giving of an Annual Kiddies' Treat has ceased to be the prerogative of Sunday Schools

and similar organisations, and it is good to note that Local Labour Parties take a growing interest in organising these sort of affairs.

Our attention was recently drawn to the activities of the Willington Ward L.L.P. (Willington-on-Tyne). This Party has been developing their work for several years, and in its last effort it entertained over 1,000 children, who, by the way, are drawn from all classes or shades of opinion; this is a *children's* treat, not only a Labour children's treat, and that policy is a wise one.

Each child receives tea, a bag of cakes, one penny, and may compete for various prizes. Any invalid or cripple is compensated for inability to take part in sports by receiving a whole 3d.

These annual functions were instituted by Councillor J. Stewart for his ward, but were afterwards taken on by the Party. Collecting cards are issued and door-to-door collections take place; over £40 was realised this year. In addition to monies raised other gifts are received and passed on for the kiddies' benefit.

We commend the enterprise shown by our Willington friends, and hope their example will spread. Our correspondent is Mr. E. Turpin, Secretary, Plantation, Archer Road, Willington-on-Tyne.

LABOUR AGENTS

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS.

LONDON: Central Wandsworth.—Mr. A. J. Herbert, 17 Bromilow Road, Dalston, E.8.

YORKSHIRE: Sheffield (Attercliffe).—Mr. Harry Jackson, 314, Attercliffe Common, Sheffield 9.

DELETIONS.

YORKS.: Sheffield (Central).—Mr. W. H. Hunt (as full-time agent).

LABOUR PARTY DIRECTORY

KEY TO INDEX LETTERS REPRESENTING LABOUR PARTY ORGANISING DISTRICTS.

A North-Eastern District	F South-Western District
B North-Western District	G Eastern District
C Midlands District	H Wales
D Southern and Home Counties District	J Scotland
E London District	K Universities

KEY TO NATURE OF CONSTITUENCY.

(CD) County Divisions	(DB) Divisional Boroughs
(SB) Single-membered Boroughs	(BD) Borough Divisions
(DMB) Double-membered Boroughs	(U) Universities

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D130	SB	Hythe D.L.P.	Mr. A. SCOTT, 6, Station Cottages, Dover Rd., Folkestone, Kent.
B150	SB	Bootle T.C. & L.P.	Ald. J. HAWORTH, J.P., 29, Raeburn Avenue, West Kirby, Cheshire.
B163	BD	Wavertree D.L.P.	Mr. D. WHELAN, 9, Macdonald St., Liverpool, 15, Lancs.
B172	BD	Moss Side D.L.P.	Mr. D. HUNTER, 363, Oxford Rd., C.-on-M., Manchester 13, Lancs.
B190	CD	Darwen D.L.P.	Mr. J. D. W. SHAW, 19, Bolton Rd., Darwen, Lancs.
E224/5	DB	Bermondsey Boro' L.P. & T.C.	Ald. J. A. W. DOUGLAS, Labour Institute, 60b, Fort Rd., Bermondsey, S.E.1.
E230	BD	Dulwich D.L.P.	Mr. S. ELLAM, 95, Grove Vale, Dulwich, London, S.E.22.
E241	BD	Hackney South D.L.P.	Mr. A. E. FENNA, 126, Wick Rd., London, E.9.
E279	BD	Westminster St. Georges D.L.P.	Mr. F. J. WADSWORTH, Top Floor, 86, Rochester Row, London, S.W.1.
D299	CD	Wood Green & Southgate D.L.P.	Mr. M. I. THOMPSON, Stirling House, 4, Stuart Crescent, Wood Green, London, N.22.
C360	CD	Leek D.L.P.	Mr. H. DAVIES, 83, Whitehouse Rd., Abbey Hulton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs.
D383	SB	Hastings D.L.P.	Mr. W. W. WOOD, J.P., 10, Salisbury Rd., St. Leonards, Hastings, Sussex.
D386	BD	Tottenham North D.L.P.	Mr. E. FURNESS, B.A., Trades Hall, 7, Bruce Grove, Tottenham, London, N.17.
A468	CD	Rother Valley D.L.P.	Mr. W. T. BLEWITT, J.P., 13, Aughton Rd. Estate, Aughton, Sheffield, Yorks.
H476	CD	Brecon & Radnor D.L.P.	Mr. R. L. TIPPINGS, 1, King St., Brecon.
J544	BD	Kelvingrove D.L.P.	Mr. J. M. WILLIAMS, c/o Dyer, 70, Ashley St., Glasgow, C.3.

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ADDITIONAL CANDIDATES ENDORSED BY N.E.C.

SEPTEMBER 5th, 1936

DURHAM : Stockton.—Miss Susan Lawrence, 41, Millbank, S.W.1.

LANCS. : Accrington.—Mr. Geo. Tomlinson, 107, Harwood Rd., Rishton, Lancs.

Salford North.—Mr. James P. Gardner, 74c, Stanlake Rd., London, W.12.

LONDON : Wandsworth Central.—Major Harry L. Nathan, 35, Wilton Crescent, S.W.1.

NORTHANTS : Peterboro'.—Mr. E. Davies, 35, Ormonde Gate, Chelsea, S.W.3.

SOM. : Taunton.—Mr. C. W. Gott, Jacks House, Luppitt, Devon.

STAFFS. : Bilston.—Mr. D. L. Mort, "Raynor," Bunkers Hill, Bilston, Staffs. ;

Smethwick : Mr. O. G. Willey, 11, Weoley Hill, Selly Oak, Birmingham,

SURREY : Mitcham.—Mr. Paul Winterton, Green Bough, Selsdon Vale, Selsdon, Surrey.

Richmond.—Mr. E. Lancaster, 7, Mt. Ararat, Richmond, Surrey.

SUSSEX : Horsham & Worthing.—Mr. H. W. Paton, 5, King's Bench Walk, Temple, E.C.4.

YORKSHIRE : Cleveland.—Mr. Wm. T. Mansfield, Ruby St., Saltburn-by-the-Sea, Yorks. ;

Hull North West.—Lt.-Com. E. P. Young, 13, Acacia Rd., N.W.8.

DENBIGHSHIRE.—Mr. J. Roberts Hughes, Craig-y-Don, Port Dinorwic, North Wales.

GLAM. : Llandaff & Barry.—Mr. Charles E. Lloyd, "Dryburgh," Cowbridge Rd., Bridgend, Glam.

Withdrawal of Candidature

BRECON AND RADNOR.—Dr. L. Haden Guest.

ON THE AIR (AND ALSO IN IT)

INCREASED AFFILIATIONS TRY IT LOCALLY

In these times of constant and increasing demands upon the resources of Local Labour Parties, when, in fact, Local Parties are only just beginning to realise the immensity of their local tasks, and that to accomplish them properly they must seek incomes running at least into three figures, the foremost of them have started in earnest upon plans for increased individual membership. That a new life and wide fields are opening up before the Party is now generally acknowledged, and the campaign we have waged in the "Labour Organiser" in favour of this awakening has not been in vain.

However, it seems opportune to remind local officers that there is another source which is not yielding adequate income or what might justly be expected. In the overwhelming number of Local Labour Parties affiliation fees still remain at twopence per member per annum—yet almost always where this is so it is an indication that a lot has yet to be done to obtain that close touch and understanding with Local Trades Union branches which is necessary to retain success.

Affiliation fees in a number of Local Parties still reach only a meagre figure, and we are utterly unable to understand the stick-in-the-mud attitude of many of them who fail either to develop their individual membership or to realise that twopenny affiliation fees cannot suffice. A number of Local Labour Parties strive in all manner of ways to make ends meet and to raise money, adopting all manner of devices, yet they fail both to develop their individual membership or to procure an adequate income from the affiliated membership they already possess. It makes us wonder whether they have ever examined the financial basis on which they are attempting to work.

Now, one thousand twopences produce the lordly sum of £8 6s. 8d. Ten thousand affiliated members, therefore, give us an income of under £85 per year—and an agent's minimum salary is £260 per annum! Have our friends

ever looked this fact in the face? Have they ever *tried* to get a satisfactory affiliation fee? That it can be done has been evidenced in more than one place. Burnley, for instance, has an affiliation fee of 1/6 per member; Ipswich has an affiliation fee of 1/- per member and there are other places with affiliation fees approaching this sum per member. Obviously it is done!

The attempt to raise affiliation fees is invariably met with the statement that though after some trouble the Unions may agree to the increased fee the additional charge is met by reducing the number affiliated, so that in the end there is no increased payment or income. What a pretty charge to level against the Unions, and what a confession of one's own ineptitude and lack of influence in those quarters.

The truth is that if present fees are not *felt* there can be little interest; the formula that the man who pays for his politics and feels that he is paying *follows his money with his interest* is just as much true of mass affiliation as it is of individual payment. If increasing the affiliation fee won't bring in more money, then there is work to do in the Trades Union branches.

And is this work in the Trades Union branches being neglected? We have written of this subject to-day because the mind of the Movement is now properly being turned to individual membership, and there is just the possibility of the campaign for increased affiliations being overshadowed by the membership campaign. This must not be, and it would be a disaster if the importance of work in the Trades Union branches was forgotten or put aside if only for a few months. Why should we not enlist the service of the Trade Unions in *all* our endeavours to expand? Why, when deputising the branches to awaken interest and to ask for increased affiliation fees, should we not also ask for their organised help in a membership campaign (there are their wives for instance)? And why, in short, has the Movement in many

places ceased to take quite the same interest in educating the Trade Union branch as it did a few years ago? The fact is we have been busy and the business and interests of some Local Parties have grown in so many directions that this rather old time method has been eclipsed. But we would like to-day to urge our readers to *get to the branches* and to prepare the minds of affiliated members for greater political effort, bigger affiliations, and more help in extending the number and membership of the Labour Party.

[Reprinted from "L.O.," June, 1925.]

ITEMS

Special interest attaches to the issue of the L.P. Executive Report this year, for the National E.C. are to report the result of its examination of the Party constitution and Standing Orders *with such amendments as it proposes to recommend.*

Until the E.C. report is issued a week or so before the Conference meets nobody knows what these amendments, if any, are to be. Not quite so satisfactory a procedure as that suggested in an R.C.A. resolution which proposes a special committee to examine and report upon the basis of conference representation, system of National E.C. election, and method of voting in order to give "constituency organisation a greater measure of democratic expression and control."

There will again be a pooling of fares for constituency delegates to Conference. Trade Union delegates and candidates are not included in this pool.

A special conference on Film Propaganda is to be held at Edinburgh on Saturday, October 3rd. The Rt. Hon. F. O. Roberts, M.P., will preside. Mr. Roberts is Chairman of a Joint T.U. and Labour Committee which is planning a Film Propaganda service for the Movement. This conference starts at 2.30 p.m.

The new Local Government Department at Labour Party Headquarters is now settling down to work. The first of the promised series of Local Government Circulars has now

appeared. It deals with an interesting and oft enquired after aspect of public representatives' privileges. Those interested, not having received a copy, should write for one.

From reports received a goodly number of students have already enrolled under the Labour Party's recently extended scheme of study for Labour Party officials, etc.

Among the many suggestions for assisting rural areas why has nobody ever thought of employing a team of assisted door-to-door literature sellers. Given good sellers, steady hours, and the issue of a series of simple pamphlets and booklets under famous names, the "assistance" per man per week needed to make up profits to a decent wage would not be so heart-breaking. And many men would love this work—and the hard collar and open life.

The "Luton Herald" is an 8 pp. monthly which has reached its fifth or sixth issue. It deserves to succeed. 15,000 copies are distributed monthly. We always regard this as wonderful propaganda—and exercise for the organisation. Long live the "Luton Herald."

We advertise in another column a remarkably cheap rotary duplicator. The "Falcon" is guaranteed for two years, and it has a great range of uses for local Labour secretaries and others. We advise our readers to write for particulars to Messrs. Morton's (who are a reliable firm). 47/6 includes price of machine and equipment, viz., stencils, ink, correcting fluid, etc.

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SAM HAGUE RECALLS

Some years ago I contributed some personal "Reminiscences" to the "Labour Organiser." In response to the request of many friends I am influenced—in retirement—to re-write more fully, in the hope that such may be helpful or interesting to Agents and Organisers, still carrying on in the heat and burden of our great Labour cause.

I was appointed Agent and Organiser for Gorton Trades and Labour Council, on behalf of Mr. John Hodge, General Secretary, Iron and Steel Trades Union, April 5th, 1903 (first political agent in all the country). Retired on pension, June 30th, 1932. In nearly 30 years' agency I have been privileged to see my candidates in the House of Commons for 25 years.

During his 18 years in Parliament Mr. John Hodge attained Cabinet rank, being appointed first Labour Minister and, later, Minister of Pensions. Ex-Servicemen should feel gratitude to Hodge and the Labour Party for the generous provision won for them (including all maimed in previous wars) despite stern opposition of the Treasury.

On the retirement of Rt. Hon. John Hodge, in 1923, I transferred my services to Mr. John Baker at Bilston, Staffs. It was a quick change, midway in the election campaign—only 16 days before the poll—and here I suffered my first defeat, 1,101 adverse majority.

Bilston was, in many ways, a backward constituency; no I.L.P.; no Trades Council; very few in trade unions, and Communism unknown. In 1924, however, we scored a Labour victory with 1,745 majority; and again in 1929 with 5,044 majority.

During my career as Political Agent I had many peculiar experiences; sometimes anxious, often exciting, but always great joy in the fight.

After our first victory in Gorton, 1906, majority 4,225, the Tory Agent published an 8-page pamphlet, attacking and misrepresenting Labour's policy and programme. Though his reasoning and statements were "a twist," the pamphlet was, nevertheless, clever and specious; it could not be ignored. Therefore I wrote a reply, also 8 pages; 40,000 copies were circulated and I flatter myself that I spiked his guns.



SAM HAGUE, J.P.,
Past President Labour Agents' Union

[The following is an extract from Mr. Hague's "reply."—Ed., "L.O."]:—

You are having more than value for your money. The Labour Party has not spent more money upon its central organisation during its seven years of existence than would keep a thousand men on strike for a month. And yet at the last General Election the candidates of the Labour Party won some of the most hopeless seats in the country, polled 323,195 votes, and increased the representation of the Party in Parliament from four to thirty.

Look at these interesting accounts:—

Cost of Defending Trade Unionism in the Law Courts.			
Taff Vale Case	...	...	£43,000
South Wales Miners' Case	...	...	75,000
Denaby Main Case (at least)	...	...	50,000
Total	...	...	£168,000

Result: Trade Unionism undermined.

Cost of Defending Trade Unionism in Parliament.

Labour Party Affiliations: Fees from beginning (seven years)	...	£4,316
Parliamentary Fund: Total Expenditure from beginning to December, 1906	...	10,606
Estimated Cost of Elections: Fifty Candidates £1,000	...	50,000
Total	...	£64,922

Result: A Labour Party of 30 members, and the most successful Labour session ever known.

Notwithstanding our substantial majority in 1906 (4,225), something like a slump was experienced in January, 1910, and though, with a weak opponent, the fight looked easy, I soon realised that it was a fight for life. My candidate was optimistic, would not see danger, and fought as though victory was certain. The Tory was humorous (though he had no constructive programme), and his plausible manner was winning him support. He poked fun at trade union leaders "battening on the too trustful workers," and posed as the real friend of all working men and their wives. Still, we just scraped in by 473 majority.

Less than a year—December, 1910, brought another General Election, under very difficult circumstances, so far as we were concerned. Same Tory opponent, thousands of removals; Iron and Steel Trades Union under a cloud by expulsion from Trades Union Congress (unjustly, but difficult to argue or explain). Worst of all, Mr. Hodge was away in Australia, recuperating after an illness. The Tories looked for an easy win. Journalists, forecasting probable results in regard to the various political parties, stated "the Labour Party only admit one seat hopeless, and that is Gorton."

Our Executive met to consider action. I would not believe Labour officials in London had made any such statement, and I advised re-adoption of our absent Member as candidate, and vigorous prosecution of the campaign. This was agreed and we got busy. After a week or so of campaigning, a deputation from the E.C. of the Iron and Steel Trades Union visited me "to find out the position and our prospects."

Briefly I told them "our position is really desperate, but not by any means hopeless." I summarised the prevailing circumstances, pro and con. Told them the fight was not sufficiently developed to estimate final results with any degree of certainty, but I felt strongly our prospects were, if anything, better than a year ago.

Then the chief spokesman dropped a bombshell. He informed me that "after fullest discussion and consideration, and in consultation with the Labour Party E.C. in London, he and his colleagues had come with a mandate to declare the fight off." The

Labour Party E.C. were most emphatic that the seat was hopeless, and could not be retained. "Well, gentlemen, said I, that is for you to decide. I have summarised the position to the best of my ability and it remains for you to judge how far my judgment is justified by the circumstances I have enumerated. I am amazed by the expressed opinion of the Labour Party officials, especially as they have made no investigation here. Anyway, this is the first suggestion I have had that there should be no fight. In the absence of such I have started the fight; I would have expected censure if I had not started, and £150 to £200 has already been spent and that will have to be paid whether we fight or not."

Each member of the deputation expressed personal opinions in view of my final statement; each admitted they were impressed by the opinions given, and my reasons for same. Finally, they agreed to take the responsibility of authorising me to proceed. Well, it proved to be the hottest, though the

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merriest, campaign I have ever experienced. At the finish we polled some 400 more votes than we got in January, and increased our majority from 473 to 653.

A prominent Suffragette came from the London Office to assist in the campaign. I received a wire notifying me as to the time of her arrival, but only a few minutes before her train was due. Having no means of covering the half-hour's journey to Victoria Station, and the way to my office being very direct, I relied upon her getting a tram or taxi. When she did arrive she was very indignant that no one had been sent to meet her.

I allowed her a long rest, and arranged her first meetings for the following night; first meeting at the Baptist Schoolroom, Gorton, second at the Crossley Hall, Openshaw. She was taken by motor car to the first meeting (quite near) but returned on foot within a few minutes demanding to know "why she should be sent to an empty room?" I said "I have no time for this sort of thing," put her into a car and sent her to her second meeting, where she would sit on the platform for more than an hour, awaiting her turn.

After the meeting she called at my office very excited, very delighted. "She had had a wonderful time; where would I require her for dinner-hour meetings next day?" I said, "I shall come to see you in the morning; until then there is nothing arranged." Next day I took my cheque book. "Miss —," said I, "it appears to me that you and I are not going to get on as we should. Therefore, I think you had best tell me what your expenses amount to. I will write a cheque for whatever you say and you can return to London. I have no time for scenes with any of our workers, either humble or exalted!"

She fired up, informed me "she was a capable speaker and must be used for big meetings." I told her she had no right to leave the first meeting; in less than half-an-hour after she came away the place was packed, 450 people, most working overtime, hurrying direct from work to the meetings.

I said:—"If you stay here you will take your share of meetings, both large and small; and I must have an undertaking that there shall be no more such scenes, otherwise we finish now." She held out a long time; informed me

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"she was Irish." To which I assured her I had realised the fact; also, that though she had many virtues of that race she also had some of their vices. "Anyway," said I, "there's only one Election Agent here, and I'm it. You either give me assurance that you will work to my instructions, or you leave us." I got the assurance, she acted loyally throughout, proved herself a star and did yeoman service.

One of our "Labour" Councillors ratted after the previous contest (January) and took service on behalf of the Tory candidate. He also influenced a few of our rank and file to work for White. I heard mysterious suggestions that a trump card was in reserve for the eve of the poll. I gleaned something of its probable nature (yellow sheet enclosed). It is a huge lie; but I did not wait for its appearance; I issued a counter-blast immediately ("Biting the Hand."). After the hottest fight I have ever had we finished, as previously stated, with an increased majority of 653 instead of 473.

This was the Tory leaflet (extract):

Dec., 1910

HODGE AND THE MINIMUM WAGE!

How **HE PAID** his **WORKERS** at the Election in January last.

Mr. Wither's and Mr. Blackburne, Chief Clerks for Committee Rooms: 1½d. per hour, or 80 hours for 10s.

Mr. Taylor, **BREAKING** up Mr. White's Meetings and acting as **BLACKLEG BILL-POSTER** for Mr. Hodge's Party: 1½d. per hour, or 80 hours for 10s.

Mr. Greenwood, Special Messenger: 1½d. per hour.

Mr. Rodgers, Tracing Removal: 1d. per hour. These are only a few of those who had to work for starvation wages.

THE STANDARD RATE of Wages is 30/- for this work, yet the so-called Labour Party employed these men who were unemployed, with Starving Children at Home, which Mr. Hodge's agents knew, yet they preach a minimum wage.

GOD SAVE US FROM THESE SO-CALLED LABOUR REPRESENTATIVES.

Fellow Workers, rouse yourselves and clear our Unions from these Blood Suckers.

A Disgusted Labour Man,
Who has had enough of Hodge and his Party.

HOW THE LABOUR MEMBERS BLEED THE WORKERS

Extract from a Trades Council Balance Sheet relating to a Meeting at Gorton.

				£	s.	d.
Paid JOHN HODGE , Railway Fares and Hotel Expenses, One day One Speech	...	...	...	3	12	3
Paid W. CROOKS for assisting John Hodge at the same Meeting, One Speech	4	15	0			
				£8	7	3

Paid to Hall Keeper for his Services, 1s. 2d.

FELLOW WORKERS,

THESE ARE THE CHARGES FOR ATTENDING MEETINGS TO TELL US HOW THEY REPRESENT US.

NO WONDER THEY DON'T WANT TO LOSE THEIR JOBS, IT BEATS WORKING.

(To be continued)

A BIRMINGHAM PEACE PLAN

THE danger of a Second World War becomes obviously greater with every day that passes.

The League of Nations is palpably failing to maintain peace, and governments are reverting to the old policy of "preparedness" which must be the prelude to a shattering conflict.

Here is a plan which, had we the courage to adopt it, would make an end of war and of military oppression until the end of time.

It has been widely endorsed.

Price 2d.

12 copies	..	1/10
50 "	..	7/-
100 "	..	13/6

From The Blackfriars Press, Ltd., Smith-Dorrien Road, Leicester or from Wilfred Wellock, 12 Victoria Avenue, Quinton, Birmingham.

FOR THE LITERATURE SELLER

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Coal: The Labour Plan. Price 3d. National Council of Labour (and Labour Party).

A report which has the virtue of being at the same time excellent propaganda and good reading. It should prove a good seller among intelligent people.

The Drama of Spain, 1931-1936. By A. Ramos Oliveira. Price 2d. National Council of Labour.

In this pamphlet a Spanish Socialist journalist gives an account of recent history.

Why the Banks Should Be Nationalised. By a Bank Manager. Price 1d. The Labour Party.

A useful contribution to what will form a focal question at the next election. And the right sort of output for the Labour Party.

Women in Offices. Price 1d. The Labour Publications Dept.

A reprint of the report on this subject which was presented to the National Conference of Labour Women.

The Nazi Party: The State and Religion. ("Friends of Europe" Publications No. 41.) Friends of Europe, 122, St. Stephen's House, S.W.1.

The aim of this pamphlet is to set out Herr Hitler's ideas of Party, State and Religion, and it is the fourth pamphlet having the object of faithfully reflecting the views of Germany's hero. And we believe intention and act are fair and reliable. This pamphlet raises anger, if not hate and abhorrence of its subject, and because modern war propaganda uses much the same sort of stuff, and even flourishes under the cloak of propaganda for peace (and through the channels of peace organisations), we were more than ordinarily interested to see where the drift was. Rennie Smith, organiser

to Friends of Europe, must forgive us, for we all are suspect to-day! The verdict however is "not guilty" and the pamphlet is a helpful guide to understanding, which really is, we hope, the aim of Friends of Europe.

Train for Peace. Price 1d. The Woodcraft Folk, 5, Brightman Rd., S.W.18.

A pamphlet which is propaganda for peace and propaganda, too, for the Folk. We do hope some of our readers will get this pennyworth and so reach a better understanding of work among the children.

A Birmingham Peace Plan. (Signed by Harrison Barrow, Mrs. Florence and Wilfred Wellock.) Price 2d. from W. Wellock, 12, Victoria Avenue, Quinton, Birmingham.

Though "made in Birmingham" (and we hate the title for that) the pamphlet is a thoughtful and profound contribution to the problem of to-day. And it reads sense, which also is what the world wants. This pamphlet turns up thoughts and facts which are often forgotten in the selfish and inspired hates of nations and systems. Buy it. Post free 2½d. 100 at 13/6.

Rent Rebates. By Geoffrey Wilson. Price 1/- The New Fabian Research Bureau (and Victor Gollancz).

Timely, for the Municipal Elections are here—exhaustive and necessary to councillor, candidate and speaker. But we do wish N.F.R.B. could strike a more popular price.

Foreign Trade. By Harold Barger. Price 6d. (By same publishers.)

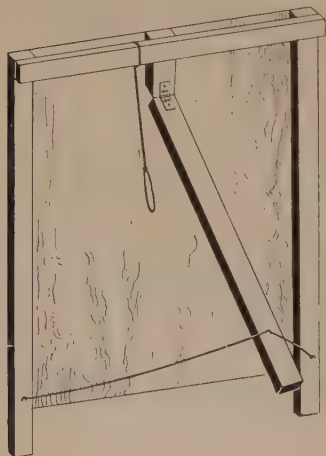
Not quite true to its title. The pamphlet discusses chiefly the monetary aspects and the problems arising therefrom to confront a Socialist State. Socialists think ahead and this is part of the process.

TWO USEFUL TIPS

The following particulars and illustrations of a home-made literature stand and a portable notice board will interest many of our readers. These devices have been found most useful in the Westhoughton Division.

To those who may ask why not combine one or the other with a portable platform, the answer is that the possession of a suitable conveyance obviates the necessity for a portable platform.

Readers who still have use for a portable platform can readily adapt either design to cover the additional purpose.

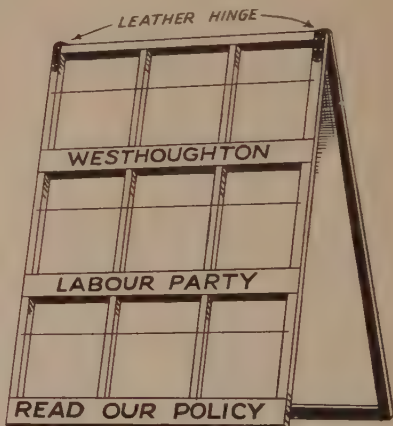


PORTABLE NOTICE BOARD.

This board is made of plywood and can be tied to any convenient site or will stand on its own legs. The board is a sheet of 30 x 20 inch plywood. Along each long edge at the back is nailed a piece of wood, 2 inches by $\frac{3}{4}$ inch and 33 or 34 inches long. These project 3 or 4 inches at the bottom to form legs. Down the middle, from the top edge is nailed a short piece of the same wood about 4 inches long.

Across these three pieces is nailed a fourth piece, 20 inches long to brace the whole board. The rear leg is a similar piece of wood, 29 or 30 inches

long, which is hinged to the short centre piece. Small staples are fixed behind each leg about 3 inches from the ground. A piece of cord, passing through the middle staple, is tied to the two outside staples to limit the movement of the hinged back leg. A short piece of cord ending in a running noose is fixed to the top cross piece near its centre. In windy weather, half a brick or a similar weight hung in the noose serves to prevent the board from being blown over.



A HOME-MADE LITERATURE STAND.

Our stand is made from two sheets of plywood, about 32 inches by 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches and will display nine pamphlets, the front board being divided into nine compartments (each about 10 inches by 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches) by strips of half-inch square stripwood nailed on.

To retain the lower edges of the pamphlets, three strips of plywood, 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and about 2 inches wide are nailed right across. About three inches from the top of each row of pamphlets, a wire is stretched tightly right across the board and secured by small wire staples, serving to retain the upper part of the pamphlets. The back board can be made up like the front to carry pamphlets, or it can be made into a notice board appealing for members, as in our case.

To strengthen the back board, we have framed the edges with half-inch stripwood. The two boards are hinged at the top with strips of leather in such a manner that the back can be folded over the front to cover the pamphlets, the whole being tied up with strong cord for carrying.

When opened out, the boards stand leaning against each other with the pamphlets and the notice displayed. Note that the leather hinges must NOT be nailed to the top edges of the boards.

The whole has been painted bright yellow and lettered. On the front, where the pamphlets are displayed, the lettering is on the strips which retain the foot of the pamphlets.

On the back board, painted yellow, the lettering is in three colours, red, green and black and reads :—

**JOIN THE
WESTHOUGHTON
LABOUR PARTY**

as an

INDIVIDUAL MEMBER
of one of our
LOCAL LABOUR PARTIES

Subscription

One Penny per Week

ENROL HERE

The sketch below may help to make the description clearer.

That Labour Monthly

The Editor of one of our regular monthlies, on resigning his voluntary post, writes:—

"I am writing to thank you most sincerely for the splendid way in which you have produced the paper, and done all you could to help during the past few years. If ever I move from here and have anything to do with starting another Labour Monthly, I shall certainly see that it is printed at Ripley, if you can manage it. But I am hoping to stay here and to watch the '— Labour News' grow into quite a big fellow.

With every good wish,
Yours sincerely,
—."

(The original letter can be seen by the Editor of the L.O. or any enquirer.)

The foregoing was received in February by

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LET US QUOTE YOU

HOW WOOLWICH BUILT ITS MEMBERSHIP

BY COUNCILLOR MABEL CROUT, J.P., WOOLWICH

(The following is a summary of an address at the Business Conference of Women's Sections, Swansea, 21st May.)

I hope the delegates will not think I have come to tell them of some magic trick. In Woolwich we have difficulties as in other constituencies, and have only been able to build up membership and maintain it by solid and persistent work. Membership cannot be built without work. We must make Socialists if we want to win Socialism, and it is necessary first to have good organisation. In building membership boldness and audacity count every time. The Party is worth advertising and should be talked about

and advertised whether membership is small or large. Though we now have a large membership in Woolwich we still advertise ourselves and advertise that we want members.

Pay for Your Politics

The present position in the country is that only one out of twenty people who voted Labour at the last election is inside the Labour Party. Our figure in Woolwich is one in every eight, and our aim is one in every three, so that we are far from our ideal. Woolwich has not retained its membership by asking for only 1s. a year. If 1s. only were asked for, we could double

the membership. Last year we had £719 in subscriptions, an average of 3s. 6d. from every member. It may not be possible in every constituency to get as good an average, but it is important that the Party is not made too cheap. From a 1s. membership subscription, fourpence must be given to Head Office, twopence to the Federation and sixpence is left for local organisation. What is the use of trying to build up your Party on sixpence per member? It cannot be done.

Woolwich is in no sense a special constituency. We have to work hard to keep members together. Special membership campaigns have had a place in our work, but we believe in a continuous membership campaign as the only way to keep bringing members into the Party. We know from experience that many people who come in through a special campaign fall out again, and in between the special campaigns a continuous campaign must go on to build up membership.

On the Doorstep

A personal call is essential. It is no use preparing a leaflet and sending it out, or having a membership form printed and sent out in an envelope. The whole thing will fall to the ground unless there are enough workers to call personally on people. Results are bound to come by that method. Instead of asking every member for a penny per week, we in Woolwich take a man and wife for sixpence a month. We have found that sixpence is a nice figure to collect and it has been very successful, and worked well, in getting man and wife inside the Party. The test of good membership is the number of people who are really prepared to pay towards the Party. We could have 10,000 members in the Woolwich Labour Party, but I would rather have 5,000 members sacrificing something for the Party and paying a penny per week. Those members are much more valuable than those who merely pay a shilling once a year.

Regularity of Collection

To maintain membership, the first essential is regularity of collection—the same hour, of the same day, of the same week, in every month. That is tremendously important. It is no good calling one month and missing the next and going again two or three months afterwards. In Woolwich we

have paid collectors and do not depend on the voluntary system.

Monthly subscriptions are better than yearly ones, as it is easier to keep in close touch with the members. If a yearly subscription is taken, maybe the collector will not see the member again that year. If it can be arranged to collect even a shilling contribution by a penny per month it is a very good piece of work. Under-currents of trouble are nipped in the bud and dealt with, and this often saves further difficulty of misunderstanding.

Party Activities

We have regularity of collections, and we also have regularity of ward meeting notices to every member. Eighty per cent. of the people who join may never attend a ward meeting, but the remaining 20 per cent. want to know all that is going on inside the Local Party. We must remember that all who join are members of the Party and have the right to be treated as full members and have every message sent to them. It is important also, to have attractive, well-addressed notices which will make an impression on members. Members, too, who attend meetings must be found something to do and kept busy. Then a great deal depends, at the meeting, on the cheerfulness of the Chairman and Secretary, and anyone who undertakes these duties is doing a very important piece of work.

With regard to the question of lapsed members, it is important that lapses should be followed up immediately. Whether there are paid collectors or voluntary ones, reports should be made on everybody who drops out of the Party, so that the Central Office is kept informed and a call can be arranged on those who have dropped out.

Good membership is catching. There is never a good constituency with a number of bad ones around it, and the work done by Woolwich has been followed by Lewisham, Greenwich, Deptford, and is now going all round the London area.

WOOLWICH LABOUR PARTY MEMBERSHIP

These figures should be studied along with the article on page 177. Note steadiness of balance between membership and payments. Women's membership since 1930 is given in brackets.

Year	Subscriptions	Membership	
1919	£336	2,040	
1920	£377	2,194	
1921	£431	2,763	
1922	£392	2,657	
1923	£460	3,040	
1924	£624	3,595	
1925	£715	4,714	
1926	£793	5,179	
1927	£691	4,516	
1928	£635	4,189	
1929	£698	4,424	[Women]
1930	£711	3,691	[1,614]
1931	£581	3,280	[1,574]
1932	£773	4,435	[1,888]
1933	£662	4,290	[1,903]
1934	£695	4,255	[1,813]
1935	£719	4,389	[1,863]

A FILING TIP

Many secretaries find that the accumulation of papers they wish to keep leads ultimately, owing to the lack of proper filing material, to a glorious muddle, and a final bonfire, and with it goes many useful documents they would like to have kept. Plain manilla folders are simple devices, but are not wholly satisfactory in a secretary's front room, where, in use, the papers are apt to fly about and get mixed or lost. What is wanted is some kind of binder, or loose-leaf cover, and these are discovered to be fairly expensive.

A useful home-made loose-leaf cover can be made for a copper or two, and we ourselves use several home-made devices. Let us assume it is desired to bind a number of documents of the size of an ordinary quarto letter heading. Procure from any printer a royal (20ins. by 25ins.) manilla board, for which he will charge two or three pence. Five inches might be cut off the long end, though not thrown away, for many uses can be discovered for this offcut. The board, which is now 20ins. by 20ins., should be cut directly in half, leaving two strips, 20ins. by 10ins. each. This should be folded exactly in half. Now bend the covers inside-out, folding one inch from the centre crease, so that they now form a V fold one inch deep in the centre. If now the covers are bent back again one inch from the last crease it will be found that they are exactly 8ins. by 10ins., while inside

there is a double lip in the shape of the letter "M." The papers are kept in the "V" of the "M" and the cover admits of considerable expansion.

If, luckily, a double perforator is available which will punch a double hole in all papers to be filed, and if a corresponding double hole is punched through the letter M of the folder, one has now an effective and strong loose-leaf binder that will last quite a long time in regular use. The papers may be strung either through the holes with tape, or a couple of long paper fasteners may be used.

[Reprinted from "L.O.," August, 1923.]

EARLIER MEETINGS AND NONE ON SUNDAYS?

Is it not time that we had an "earlier meeting campaign" in the Labour Party? It is a surprising thing that in some parts of the country Party meetings and even public meetings can be held as early as six o'clock in the evening and with success. But in other places meetings are convened for eight o'clock, in the expectation that by 8-30 p.m. a start might be made.

True in most places where the earliest meetings are arranged the area is a mining one, but the difference in the lateness of workers' hours does not account for the whole of the disparity in commencing times. Late meeting times are a legacy of the fifty-four and sixty hour week. They are not in keeping with the workers' hours to-day.

Truth is that slovenly methods have crept in, and the habit once learned has never been thrown off. We are unable to understand the persistence of the late meeting, for not only have workers' hours shortened, but the whole habit of evening town life, at any rate in the provinces, has largely mended for the better during recent years. Shopping hours, for instance, have been greatly curtailed. Not only can shop assistants now attend meetings earlier, but others have not the excuse that they had to stay out shopping.

Street parades in all parts of the country cease at a far earlier hour than they did when shopping ran into late hours, and on Saturdays even into Sunday morning. If the streets are quieter and people go to bed earlier, why should Labour meetings be held and continue at hours which defy the

popular tendency? Are workers' brains as active and efficient at 10 p.m. as they would be at 8 p.m.? Frankly, we don't think so, and the needless expense of late lighting, heating and stewarding is also a factor in the case.

[Reprinted from "L.O.," April, 1925.]

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

NAUGHTY!

Question.—I would be glad of your advice on the following query. We have recently had a Guardians' Election and after the poll had been declared I was called in to the polling station where I found 35 empty bottles of Bass (two cases having been sent back empty). These, I presume, were part of the refreshments for the Returning Officer's staff, which consisted of eight persons. Then I found these had been sent from the successful candidate's home. Under my instructions the bottles were kept in the room and were seen by the headmaster in the school the next morning, and also by the school correspondent. They were removed after a message had been sent to the successful candidate's home. What is your advice thereon?

Answer.—The particulars afforded above are somewhat hazy, though we imagine that haziness would not be confined to one quarter in this matter, for certainly the eight gentlemen who consumed 35 bottles of beer (presumably in the short interval after the count), would have suffered a certain cloudiness the next morning. From the facts disclosed it is not altogether clear when the bottles arrived, or how long or over what period the debauch was spread out. Presumably our enquirer was too much appalled by the scene of desolation presented by these empty bottles to get the facts exactly as they should be. Anyway, while no actual legal enactment appears to have been broken a thoroughly indecent and reprehensible orgy appears to have taken place, and we would advise our correspondent to give every possible publicity to the facts, and, if possible, secure a discussion on the matter at the next meeting of the Guardians, taking care to see that the press get hold of the matter. No one objects to an after-the-poll civility on the part

of a victor, nor to a reasonable extension of hospitality to presiding officers and their officials, but the present case seems to have gone outside the limits of propriety and reason.

[Reprinted from "L.O.," July, 1924.]

JOINT SELECTION MEETINGS

Question. I should be glad if you could give me a ruling as to the eligibility of the Executive Committee to vote at a Joint Meeting of the Executive and a Ward Committee for the purpose of selecting Local Government candidates, as provided for under Set C. of Model Rules, Clause XII. para. 2.

There does not appear to be any clause in the Constitution covering this point.

Answer. Joint meetings of the character to which our correspondent refers are to be found laid down in rules Set A, Set C, and Set D. We suppose that there are also exceptional cases where Parties working under a modified form of Set B rules have a similar rule. The rule reads—"The selection of candidates shall be made from the list of members endorsed by the General Committee of this Party at joint meetings of the Executive Committee and the respective Ward Committees during the month of ———. The General Committee shall have the final decision in case of any dispute arising."

In the case of Central Parties in Divided Boroughs (Set D) the words "or its representatives" are interposed after the words "Executive Committee of this Party," and it will be noted that there is no express provision for the representation of the Divisional Party at the joint meeting, and that it is the Central Party and not the Divisional Party which is the final arbiter in case of dispute.

To answer our friend's question it is obvious that at a joint meeting each representative properly attending is entitled to a vote.

There are always all sorts of possibilities in local organisation—but the rule in question works admirably to meet most situations. There is no attempt to say how many votes the central or the local body may each possess and it is clear that in practice the balance of power lies with the organisation which is most alive and sensible to its duties.